

*Please circulate this issue among your staff and coworkers.*

Winter 2003

## The P2 Corner

Like most small business owners, Jerry Green, owner of Jerry's Automotive at 2709 No. 19th, found it difficult and frustrating trying to understand environmental regulations. The costs and burdens of disposing of hazardous wastes were becoming unmanageable. While regulations forced him to "do the right thing," they didn't necessarily help him do it the smart way. That was when Jerry decided that not having the hazardous wastes made more sense than trying to dispose of them.

His first step was to buy an antifreeze recycling unit. Jerry found a way to balance the pH in the used antifreeze, add a rust inhibitor, and revitalize the antifreeze to make it serviceable again. When he began this effort, he was disposing of about three 55-gallon drums of antifreeze per year. "I was losing money," Jerry reported. Now he can reuse at least 55 gallons of antifreeze. That is 55 gallons of antifreeze that he does not have to purchase.

The success of the antifreeze recycling effort encouraged Jerry to begin recycling used oil, oil filters, and batteries. The oil recycling was one of the more rewarding programs. Jerry and his staff of three employees drains an oil filter into a 55-gallon drum for 48 hours. Jebro Recycling Company (1-800-831-8037) collects the oil for free if the shop has at least 200 gallons of used oil for pick up. M & M Used Oil Services, Inc. (1-888-659-4745) also collects used oil. This oil is sold to two other companies to be used in waste-oil heaters, retrieving the energy value.



Action Oil Filter Recycling Company ([402] 580-0602) collects the used oil filters at a cost of \$45 per 55-gallon drum of oil filters. Action incinerates the filters and retrieves the metal. This metal is resold and reused. Hi-Dri is used on oil spills in the shop. Action also incinerates the oil out of the Hi-Dri so the absorbent could be reused.

The batteries are recycled by Harold's Battery Service (466-8667). Used solvent is collected by Safety Kleen ([402] 333-6321) for recycling or proper disposal. Shop rags are laundered by Paramount Laundry (435-4313) and reused.

Because of the cost savings of the recycling efforts, Jerry's can charge \$9.90 for an oil change and include antifreeze replacement and other tune-up work. "This is very economical and works for everybody, including the customer," Jerry says.

*For more information, contact Jerry Green at 477-2400.*



**POLLUTION IS NOTHING BUT  
THE RESOURCES WE ARE  
NOT HARVESTING. WE  
ALLOW THEM TO DISPERSE  
BECAUSE WE ARE IGNORANT  
OF THEIR VALUE.**

—BUCKMINSTER FULLER

# Seeking Nominations

—HARRY HEAFER, COORDINATOR, KEEP LINCOLN AND LANCASTER COUNTY BEAUTIFUL

Coordinators of The Lincoln–Lancaster County Environmental Awards Program are seeking nominations for the 2003 Lincoln–Lancaster County Environmental Awards. We encourage Lancaster County residents to recognize those who are making efforts to protect the environment. You can nominate an individual, school, organization, or business for an environmental award.

Awards recognize achievement and dedication to protecting or improving the environment by local action in the following categories:

## **Pollution Prevention (P2)**—

Preventing pollution and waste from being created. This award emphasizes reducing the toxicity of wastes discarded as well as reducing the amount or volume of waste through wise purchasing decisions.

**Waste Reduction and Recycling**—Reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill. This award recognizes recycling and other diversion efforts that convert potential waste into usable (or reusable) products.

**Water Conservation**—Reducing water use through utilizing water conservation equipment or planting drought-tolerant plants.

**Cleanup/Beautification**—Improving an area's appearance through landscaping, plantings, or design. This award also recognizes significant effort to pickup or reduce litter and other waste from around a business site, park, school, or home. This award also recognizes individuals or groups that have removed unattractive dumpsters, vehicles, etc. from a site.

**Residential/Commercial Development**—Reducing waste during construction by using drought-tolerant landscaping, energy efficient building materials and design, green building techniques, and other environmentally friendly landscaping and construction materials and methods.



**Environmental Education/Awareness**—Using new or unique methods for providing or supporting environmental education programs. This award recognizes efforts to increase awareness of local environmental issues and to promote good environmental stewardship.

Nomination forms can be obtained by calling 441-8035. You must complete and return the nomination form by March 22, 2003. The sponsoring programs will host an awards ceremony in the spring at a date and location to be announced. The Lincoln–Lancaster County Environmental Awards Program is a collaborative project of the Lincoln–Lancaster County Health Department and the Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Department.

For more information call Harry Heafer at 441-8035.



## **WASTE MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY**

**Reduce** the amount and the toxicity of the waste you discard. Purchase less hazardous or less toxic materials in smaller amounts. This is the best choice.

**Reuse** as much as you can. Pour used but usable oil back into a machine. Catch dripped or evaporated solvent and put it back in the tank. Reuse used pallets to ship materials or to make shelving or racks for products.

**Recycle** what you cannot reuse rather than discard it.

**Treat** hazardous or toxic waste to take out the impurities.

**Discard** only what you cannot reuse or recycle, after you have reduced the amount of waste your processes produce.



# BEL Awards



Businesses for Environmental Leadership (BEL) recognized 16 Lincoln businesses at the first annual BEL awards ceremony and reception on Thursday, November 14 at Lazlo's, 5900 Old Cheney Road. New business members, founding businesses of the program, and city dignitaries attended this event.

Several charter members of BEL offered an informational presentation on the program. An awards ceremony followed this presentation. Businesses were recognized for voluntarily meeting environmental criteria that reduced their negative impact on the environment. The criteria requires businesses to develop and implement a pollution prevention plan to reduce or eliminate their use of toxic materials, reduce their waste streams, or help protect the environment in other ways.

BEL is an organization established by small business owners to encourage good environmental stewardship. Through this program, the Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department offers confidential technical

—E. J. SCHUMAKER, GRANT COORDINATOR

assistance to guide business owners in reducing or eliminating their use of toxic chemicals. A free energy audit from Lincoln Electric System provides a detailed analysis of energy use—both electric and gas—and offers suggestions on how to reduce energy use by installing more energy efficient equipment, lighting fixtures and heating and cooling equipment or by improving building insulation.

Membership in the organization has the potential to save businesses money through reduced disposal costs as well as material and operating costs. Another goal is to reduce employee absenteeism by reducing employees' exposure to irritating chemicals or other materials. BEL businesses want to ensure that our land, air, and water are protected for future generations. Through this program, the citizens of Lancaster County have access to businesses who are good stewards of our natural resources.

For more information on the BEL program, call E. J. Schumaker at 441-8036.



*J. W. Ennis*



*Left to right: Ken Westerhold, Dan Davison, George Witt, J. R. Stelzer, Jerry Placzek, Tony Young, Craig Sparks, Carl Rohman, Sue Quambush, Steve Hatten, Don Kubik, and Ken Svoboda.*

## Understanding Air Pollution

The term “air pollution” has a specific meaning. The chemicals that are known to be pollutants are specifically defined. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) has identified six common air pollutants as “criteria pollutants.” These six pollutants are ozone, nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>x</sub>), particulate matter (soot, dust, etc.), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>x</sub>), and lead. Other common air pollutants are Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Most of these pollutants come from burning fuel (as in private vehicles and industrial furnaces) or from other forms of combustion.

The EPA has posted limits on emissions of these pollutants because they have been proven to harm human health. Many are known or suspected carcinogens. At the least, they irritate eyes and lungs. Some are poisons that can cause birth defects or death.



A subset of some criteria pollutants include 188 compounds such as benzene, methylene chloride, dioxin, mercury, and toluene. These hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) have been demonstrated or are suspected of causing cancers, respiratory problems, heart and lung diseases, and even death.

If air pollution was just unattractive, it would be bad enough. Most air pollutants also cost businesses money in the form of law suits, employee sick days, and fines or operating fees. The EPA, by mandate from Congress according to the will of U.S. citizens, regulates these substances because they are a threat to public health and safety. The rules that limit the use and

emission of these substances were created to keep Americans safe and working productively for many years. Pollution prevention (P2) is the best way to ensure we all have a better life, free from air pollutants and the damage they do.

## NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS (NAAQS)

The EPA established certain air quality standards for the nation. These standards set limits on the amount of criteria air pollutants that can be emitted. They apply to the ambient (outside) air and are divided into two classes: *primary* and *secondary*.

**Primary standards** limit the amount of criteria air pollutants that can be emitted in order to protect public health. The main goal of these standards is to protect the health of “sensitive” populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly.

**Secondary standards** limit air pollution in order to prevent decreased visibility and damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings. These concerns are secondary to personal and public health. Nonetheless, they damage our quality of life.

## TOXIC AIR POLLUTANTS

In addition to the criteria air pollutants, the EPA has set standards to limit another class of pollutants. Toxic air pollutants are also called “hazardous air pollutants.”

Local agencies, such as the Lincoln–Lancaster County Health Department, work in cooperation with the EPA to monitor and control all of these air pollutants. For more information, please visit the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/air/urbanair/6poll.html> or the Lincoln–Lancaster County Health Department’s Environmental Quality Section webpage at <http://www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/health/envIRON/pollu/>.



### Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

3140 “N” Street  
Lincoln, NE 68510-1514

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**For more information or for P2 technical assistance, call 441-8040.**

<http://www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/health/envIRON/pollu/>

Bruce Dart, MS ..... Health Director  
Phil Rooney, Ph.D. .... Editor/Layout